

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL163
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Crickets Preschool
-------------------------	---------------------------

Address of Service:	Malahide Cricket Club, Dublin Road, Malahide, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	K36 W920
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Ann Bracken
-------------------------------------	-------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	24 January 2023
----------------------------	-----------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	0
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	---

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords Co. Dublin, K67 Y5C6
Inspection undertaken by:	S Taaffe
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

The registered provider has operated an early years service in the Malahide area since 1993, and from this setting in Malahide Cricket Club since 2005. This sessional service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.30pm from Monday to Thursday for 41 weeks each year. Pre-school children aged 2½ years - 6 years are accommodated in the service. The service is conducted from one room in the cricket clubhouse. The service does not access any other space within the premises apart from the sanitary accommodation. Parking for parents and staff is available, if required, in the car park on the cricket club grounds to the front of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider and 3 staff members work directly with the children in the service on a daily basis.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 29. The findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and a named person was appointed to deputise when required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 9.15am.

The files maintained for the registered provider and the 3 staff members employed in the service were reviewed by the inspector.

(2)(a) & (b) There were 2 written references available for the registered provider and for 2 of the 3 staff members. The 4 written references which were available for 2 staff members were validated.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and for the 3 staff members.

(d) Not applicable as following a review of the staff files there was no evidence that international police vetting was required for any adult in the service.

(4) The registered provider and the 3 staff members held appropriate childcare qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) & (b) There were no written and validated references available for inspection in relation to 1 of the 3 staff members employed in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

Corrective Action

References received and on file. Copies sent to the inspector.

Preventive Action

References are available for future inspections.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of two written, validated references for the relevant staff member.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliance observed under Regulation 9(2)(a) & (b) has been adequately addressed.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that at all times an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) The minimum adult to child ratio was maintained in the service. The registered provider and 2 staff members were working directly with 19 pre-school children when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service on the morning of inspection and all remained throughout the inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) Registration forms were available for 21 of the 22 children who attend the service.

The available 21 registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) A registration form was not available for 1 child who attends the service. Therefore, the service did not have sufficient documented details available for this child including a record of the person(s) authorised to collect the child from the service, information as to whether the child had allergies or not, or a record of the child's immunisations.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

Corrective Action

Another set of forms have been provided to the relevant child's parents, for completion.

Preventive Action

Any children starting in the service will have their fully completed registration forms on file before their commencement date. This will provide all up to date information on the child and provide emergency contact information.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written confirmation that the relevant registration form has been obtained.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance observed under Regulation 15(1) has been adequately addressed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service in relation to the following:

Basic needs:

- The registered provider and staff members engaged warmly and respectfully with the children throughout the inspection and demonstrated that they knew the children well, recognising their individual preferences, interests and needs.
- The registered provider supplies the children's morning snack on a daily basis. On the day of inspection apple slices, halved brioche rolls, buttered cream crackers, dry crackers and yogurt drinks were provided at 11.25am, with the children choosing a selection of their preferred options of the food choices offered. The children's water bottles were available for the children to take from a low shelf should they feel thirsty during the session.
- The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues that they needed to use the toilet. On the day of the inspection there were no nappies as all the children were toilet trained.
- The adults were observed to calmly guide and support the children to behave appropriately, including the use of positive reinforcement, encouragement and praise for kind words, sharing and taking turns. The children were observed to engage very positively with each other during the inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The children were observed to engage and interact comfortably with the adults present, using their names in conversations and play, and the adults were observed responding to the children in an interested and affirmative manner.
- The adults were observed supporting the children's choice when they chose to change or opt out of activities. The children appeared confident and relaxed in their environment and were observed naturally forming small groups and engaging in a range of tabletop and floor play activities during the inspection.

- The adults were observed greeting parents on their arrival to collect their children, spending time conversing and sharing information in a friendly way.

Physical and material environment:

- The preschool room was spacious and facilitated children's free movement.
- A plentiful number of books were available in the library area which supported children's language development and provided choice.
- A suitably-resourced rest area equipped with floor mats and cushions was provided for the children to use as a place for rest and relaxation, should they wish to do so during the session.
- The service is required to remove all play materials and equipment from the room on a number of set days each week, in keeping with the requirements of the cricket club who own the building. This is done in order to facilitate other groups to use the room on some evenings when the early years service was not in operation. An adequate amount of play materials and equipment had been set up in the preschool room prior to the inspector's arrival to the service at 9.15am and the registered provider was in the process of moving some further play resources into the preschool room.
- A range of additional indoor and outdoor play equipment and materials was stored in a separate storeroom on the premises. The inspector was informed that these materials were rotated for use into the service on a regular basis to support play and learning.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The toys and play materials were mainly stacked in open-top boxes with the contents not fully visible to the children. This reduced the opportunity for children to become involved in meaningful, sustained play. This non-compliance was also found on the last inspection.
2. There were no well-developed interest areas established such as a home corner, construction area or arts and crafts area to provide a range of diverse and enriching experiences for all the children. This non-compliance was also found on the last inspection.
3. There was a general over-reliance on plastic toys and a lack of natural, sensory and open-ended materials to encourage the children's creativity and imagination and facilitate sensorial play opportunities.
4. The range of art supplies provided was insufficient for the numbers of children in attendance and limited to crayons, pencils and paper in an open-top box, and paint and brushes on a higher-level shelf.

There was no evidence that art tools or craft materials were available. There was no children's artwork on display in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

Corrective Action

1. See-through boxes are placed on tables and the floor area to allow the children to see the contents and engage in play as they wish.
2. The registered provider has engaged with an external early years specialist quality development service and is awaiting a visit to address the layout of the preschool room to develop the areas of interest, i.e. home corner, constructions and arts and crafts area.
3. The service has purchased new sensory orientated materials to allow the children have wider play experience.
4. Arts supplies have been increased, current artwork is displayed in the arts and crafts area before being sent home at the end of each week.

Preventive Action

All of the above will be closely monitored throughout the year.

Supporting documentation submitted

A range of photographs showing additional play and sensory resources in the revised care room environment. Written confirmation that the external early years specialist quality development service has accepted the referral.

Summary Comment

The registered provider demonstrated that the non-compliances identified under Regulation 19(1)(a) have been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The external and internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the early years' service. The foldable door in place between the preschool room and the adjoining bar area in the cricket clubhouse was secured to prevent the children from accessing this area unsupervised.
- Fixed fencing was in place enclosing a hard-surfaced area outside the premises' main entrance which was located to the rear of the clubhouse. Lengths of free-standing portable fencing was provided adjacent to the two openings in this fencing and the registered provider stated that the portable fencing was put in place to fully enclose the space when the children were playing outdoors.
- The spacious grass-surfaced cricket pitch and grounds located to the side and rear of the clubhouse were enclosed with sturdy metal fencing. The gate leading from the cricket club grounds onto the roadway was closed when the children played outdoors.
- The registered provider confirmed that a risk assessment was performed prior to outdoor play or walks along the enclosed perimeter of the cricket pitch. A documented outdoor risk assessment was available in the service.
- The children were accompanied by a staff member when using the toilet, ensuring appropriate supervision when on the corridor and in the sanitary accommodation.
- The warm water temperature in the sanitary accommodation did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. The inspector was informed that the water supply was thermostatically controlled; this reduced the risk of scalding for the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children on high shelving and in locked cupboards.
- The service's designated emergency exits were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and electric hand dryers were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands after using the toilet and following messy play and outdoor play.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were available in the service.

Administration of Medication:

- There was pre-signed parental consent obtained for the administration of temperature-reducing medication to the children in the service should the need arise.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The kitchen which adjoins the preschool room was accessible to the children during the inspection. The kitchen contained a number of risks to the children's safety including access to the cooker, kettle, cleaning materials, cutlery drawer and sharp utensils.

Infection Control:

2. Wet wipes were used to clean the children's hands before eating. It was observed that the same wipe was used to clean a number of children's hands in succession. This posed a risk of cross-contamination. Furthermore, the use of wipes does not allow for effective hand hygiene for pre-school children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

Corrective Action

General Safety:

1. The kitchen door is always locked during preschool hours. Key is placed above the door for staff access.

Infection Control:

- In addition to routine handwashing at the wash hand basins, handwipes are provided on all tables to ensure no cross contamination occurs.

Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Risk assessment is completed before preschool is opened to ensure all necessary doors are locked.

Infection Control:

- All staff have been notified that there must be no cross contamination with hand wipes.

Supporting documentation submitted

A photograph of the kitchen door key hung out of the reach of children.

Summary Comment

The registered provider demonstrated that the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The children who were present in the service on the day of inspection were not documented as being present in the attendance register upon their arrival to the service, as required. Instead, at 9.40am all children were entered in the attendance record as having arrived on the premises at 9.00am. This poses a risk of the children not being counted under the daily supervision routines or in the event of an evacuation emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective action has been carried out:

Corrective Action

From now on, to keep the register book in the hall entrance and sign in each child individually as they arrive.

Summary Comment

Assurances given by the registered provider has been accepted. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box in the service which was stored safely and in a conspicuous location on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available to the adults in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) None of the adults in the service held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training.

It is acknowledged that two staff members held in-date paediatric first aid training certificates. Additionally, the registered provider submitted written correspondence to the inspectorate later on the day of the inspection confirming that two places had been booked (for herself and the designated deputy person in charge) to undertake FAR training on three specified dates in February 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

Corrective Action

FAR training has now been completed by two members of staff on 07th, 21st and 28th of February 2023. When available, copies of the certificates will be forwarded to the inspector.

Preventive Action

All staff will have up to date training for future inspections and maintaining regulations.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written confirmation that the registered provider and a staff member were enrolled to attend a FAR training course on three named dates in February 2023.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has given assurances that staff have attended training in FAR. The relevant FAR training certificates are required to be submitted, when available, in order to demonstrate regulatory compliance in respect of Regulation 25.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

(1)(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on 17/10/2022 and the smoke alarm on 22/09/2022.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) On the day of inspection a written record was not available of fire drills that had taken place within the service. Therefore, it could not be confirmed if fire drills were being practiced on a monthly basis to familiarise both adults and children of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a fire.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

Corrective Action

Fire drill records was located and a copy was sent to the inspector.

Preventive Action

Fire drill records will be displayed at all times next to the emergency door.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of fire drills completed on a monthly basis in the service for this school year (since September 2022).

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliance observed under Regulation 26(1)(a) has been adequately addressed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(e) Adequate sanitary accommodation was provided for the maximum number of 22 children who attend the service. The staff and children use the ladies toilets on the premises which are located off a corridor leading from the entrance hall. In the ladies toilets, two toilets and two hand basins were available for the children to use, and a third toilet and wash hand basin in this area was designated for staff use.

Non-Compliance Information

(c) The ambient temperatures in the preschool room and in the sanitary accommodation were below the optimum care room temperature of 18-22°C during the inspection, as detailed in table 1.1 below.

Location	Air Temperature	Time recorded
Preschool room	16.6°C	9.30am
	17.3°C	10.05am
Sanitary accommodation	16.1°C	9.40am
	16.8°C	10.20am
	15.6°C	11.25am
	15.1°C	12.05pm

Table 1.1 Air temperatures 24/01/2023.

It is acknowledged that the ambient temperature in the preschool room subsequently remained between 18.2°C – 18.7°C from 10.25am to the end of the session which was within the optimal care room temperature range.

(d) Paint was peeling and flaking on many surfaces of the children’s tables and chairs. The uneven surfaces could not be cleaned properly as a result. This non-compliance was also found on the last inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

Corrective Action

- (c) Temperature of the rooms will be monitored at all times through the provision of a room thermometer.
- (d) Children’s tables and chairs have been replaced and the old ones have been discarded.

Preventive Action

- (c) Fluctuations in temperatures will be monitored in order to maintain a comfortable range in guidance with the Regulations.
- (d) Furniture will be maintained throughout the school year.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of new plastic child-sized chairs provided in the service.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliances observed under Regulation 29(c) and (d) have been adequately addressed.